AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process ~~Process~~ for continuously preparing higher (meth)acrylic esters (C) ~~by~~ comprising transesterifying methyl (meth)acrylate (A) with higher alcohols (B) in the presence of a catalyst or catalyst mixture, characterized in that the bottom effluent of ~~the~~ a vacuum evaporation stage (6) is divided and is fed in part to ~~the~~ a reaction apparatus (1).

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): A process ~~Process~~ for continuously preparing higher (meth)acrylic esters (C) ~~by~~ comprising transesterifying methyl (meth)acrylate (A) with higher alcohols (B) in the presence of a catalyst or catalyst mixture, characterized in that the bottom effluent from ~~the~~ a film evaporator (5) is divided and is fed in part to the reaction apparatus (1).

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): A process ~~Process~~ for continuously preparing higher (meth)acrylic esters (C) ~~by~~ comprising transesterifying methyl (meth)acrylate (A) with higher alcohols (B) in the presence of a catalyst or catalyst mixture, characterized in that the bottom effluent from the film evaporator (5) is divided and is fed in part to the reaction apparatus (1) and in that the bottom effluent of the vacuum evaporation stage (6) is divided and is fed to the reaction apparatus (1).

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The process of ~~Process according to~~ Claim 1, ~~2 or 3,~~ characterized in that the higher alcohols ~~used~~ are n-butanol, isobutanol ~~or~~ 2-ethylhexanol, or a combination thereof.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The process of ~~Process according to~~ Claim ~~1,~~ ~~2 or 3,~~ characterized in that the catalyst used is a homogeneous catalyst.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 5, characterized in that the catalyst used is the titanate of the alcohol (B).

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 1, characterized in that 1 – 95% by weight of the bottom effluent from the vacuum evaporation stage (6) is fed to the reaction apparatus.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The process according to Claim 7, characterized in that 40 – 90% by weight of the bottom effluent from the vacuum evaporation stage (6) is fed to the reaction apparatus (1).

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 8, characterized in that 60 – 85% by weight of the bottom effluent from the vacuum evaporation stage (6) is fed to the reaction apparatus (1).

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 2, characterized in that 1 – 95% by weight of the bottom effluent from the film evaporator (5) is fed to the reaction apparatus (1).

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 10, characterized in that 40 – 90% by weight of the bottom effluent from the film evaporator (5) is fed to the reaction apparatus (1).

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 11, characterized in that 60 – 85% by weight of the bottom effluent from the film evaporator (5) is fed to the reaction apparatus (1).

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 3, characterized in that 1 – 95% by weight of the sum of the bottom effluents from the film evaporator (5) and from the vacuum evaporation stage (6) is fed to the reaction apparatus (1).

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 13, characterized in that 40 – 90% [lacuna] of the sum of the bottom effluents from the film evaporator (5) and from the vacuum evaporation stage (6) is fed to the reaction apparatus (1).

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The process ~~Process~~ according to Claim 14, characterized in that 60 – 85% by weight of the sum of the bottom effluents from the film evaporator (5) and from the vacuum evaporation stage (6) is fed to the reaction apparatus (1).

Claim 16 (New): The process of Claim 2, characterized in that the higher alcohols are n-butanol, isobutanol, 2-ethylhexanol, or a combination thereof.

Claim 17 (New): The process of Claim 3, characterized in that the higher alcohols used are n-butanol, isobutanol, 2-ethylhexanol, or a combination thereof.

Claim 18 (New): The process of Claim 2, characterized in that the catalyst used is a homogeneous catalyst.

Claim 19 (New): The process of Claim 3, characterized in that the catalyst used is a homogeneous catalyst.